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USDA's Research and Education Efforts in Perspective

At the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science in Washington last month, Dr. George A. Keyworth, the White House science advisor said, "We know Federal expenditures for science cannot and will not continue to grow in a way they have in the previous three decades. We need the scientific community's best and most thoughtful judgment and advice to maintain the health of our science and technology base...and to allocate resources in ways that support the most superior, promising, and relevant efforts. If we scientists do not make such choices, others will, but with less acuity."

These choices must be made in an environment of--

- * Tight budgets, where staying even with inflation could be viewed as a major accomplishment,
- * Even more intense scrutiny of our programs and priorities by oversight bodies and policy officials,
- * Added challenges to increase and improve our planning and coordination of programs to insure that the best work is done as efficiently as possible, and
- * Requests for the food and agricultural science community to become a more active participant in assessing program areas for possible redirection or reduction.

Here are some of the things we must do together:

- * Jointly and separately assure that our efforts represent the wisest investments of scarce public funds, using the criteria of excellence, pertinence, productivity, and efficiency;
- * Jointly and separately assure that our programs are well planned and coordinated in a manner that insures targeted efforts toward areas of greatest need;
- * Strengthen and build on our existing mechanisms of cooperation and collaboration, and develop new mechanisms where necessary and appropriate; and
- * Demonstrate in this time of national need that we are responsible stewards of the most important research and education enterprise ever developed.

We have two strong champions of our cause. One is simply the overwhelming importance of our work--its immeasurable contributions to individual, national, and global welfare. The other is Secretary John Block, who is a strong backer of research and education and who repeatedly supports us at OMB, in the Congress, and with the President.

I thought you might like some more details on the FY 83 budget request. Here are highlights of a speech I gave this week at a meeting of the National Industry-State Agricultural Research Council:

Agricultural Research Service

The FY 1983 budget request of \$468.6 million for ARS is an overall increase of more than \$34 million (7.9 percent) from 1982. This should protect base ARS programs from inflation's adverse effects and will achieve an annual real growth of 2.5 percent for research funding since 1981.

Basic agricultural research is being increased by \$9.6 million. This will broaden efforts in animal production, plant production, natural resources, and postharvest biological processes, with special emphasis on bioregulation of basic life.

Animal health and protection programs will rise by \$4 million. This will help solve some health problems of domestic food animals.

Plant production and protection programs will increase \$3.8 million to add support to the National Plant Germplasm System. This system is critical to the future of agriculture, since its germplasm repositories are helping us reduce the genetic vulnerability of domestic crops. Research on range and pasture plants will increase by \$0.5 million.

Soil, water, and air research will be aided by increases of \$2.9 million to determine the relationship of soil erosion and productivity and to develop erosion prediction equations; \$0.8 million to assess acid precipitation effects on agriculture; \$1.6 million to identify existing and potential water supplies and to develop efficient water storage, measurement, and use systems; and \$0.6 million to devise systems for reducing salt-loading of the Colorado River.

Human nutrition research is being increased by \$1 million to assess nutritional requirements of Americans who are at critical stages of life: pregnant and lactating women, infants, adolescents, and the elderly.

The National Arboretum will receive more than \$0.2 million for expanded security measures, including fencing.

The special tropical and subtropical research program will be moved from ARS to the Cooperative State Research Service.

No new buildings and facilities have been requested in this budget.

Operating costs will be covered by an additional \$7.2 million. The full annualization of 1982 pay cost is \$13.5 million.

Cooperative State Research Service

The request of \$232.1 million for CSRS will result in a net increase of \$10.9 million. This is an overall increase of 4.9 percent.

Hatch Act funds, which are distributed on a formula basis to land-grant universities, will increase by \$3.6 million in 1983. This will help cover salary increases of State employees and other rising operating costs of research.

Cooperative forestry research funds of \$10.8 million will support programs in timber production and wood use and distribution systems. The funds are distributed by formula to schools of forestry. This is a decrease of \$1.3 million from 1982.

Special research grants to State research institutions will decline by \$0.5 million. These grants are awarded for emerging high-priority research programs. This category includes the \$2.98 million for the tropical and subtropical research formerly funded through ARS.

Competitive research grants will be increased by \$6.6 million for basic research in the plant sciences and in human nutrition.

Animal health and disease research, which has been inadequately funded under Public Law 95-113, is proposed for elimination. It is anticipated that other Federal and State programs will sustain high-priority research in these areas.

Research facilities will be upgraded at the land-grant colleges of 1890 and Tuskegee Institute with capital improvements of \$8.8 million.

Administration costs will decrease by \$0.6 million as a result of a proposed CSRS staffing reduction during the year.

Extension Service

The new budget requests \$311.9 million. This is a decline of about 1.2 percent (\$3.8 million) from 1982's appropriations.

Smith-Lever funds distributed by formula will be set at the same level as in 1982--\$219.4 million.

Smith-Lever funds for earmarked programs will decrease by \$5.4 million. This is "seed" money to encourage State assistance for priority programs or problems. Less money is needed in 1983, because many programs, such as urban gardening, farm safety, and nonpoint pollution, are now receiving adequate funds from State and private sources and because other programs merit Federal attention.

Smith-Lever funds for land-grant colleges of 1890 and Tuskegee Institute will increase \$5.4 million to comply with the Agriculture and Food Act of 1981. These funds will help cover operating costs and program expansions.

Renewable resources extension program was a new initiative in 1982. No funding has been requested for 1983.

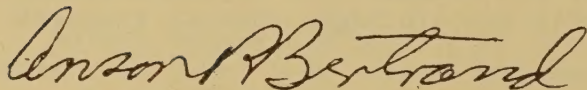
D.C. extension programs will be supported at the same level as in 1982--\$1 million.

Administration costs will decrease by \$1.8 million as a result of a proposed ES staffing reduction during the year.

National Agricultural Library

The 1983 budget request for \$9 million is 8 percent greater than 1982's. This will meet increased operating costs and improve services to field locations, including national cost-sharing for--

- * Regional indexing,
- * Document delivery,
- * Library information creation and dissemination, and
- * Creation of an integrated reproduction management file.



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